

PRESS RELEASE

ELP Webinar: Lack of Skilled Workforce in the Logistics Sector: how to overcome shortages and attract talent?

Brussels, 16 November 2022 – At the third webinar organised by the European Logistics Platform (ELP) this year, EU policymakers and industry representatives met to discuss the challenges resulting from the lack of skilled workforce in the logistics sector. Identifying and developing solutions will be crucial to improve the situation of the shortage of skilled drivers and other logistics personnel in Europe. This includes attracting younger workforce to the profession, removing barriers to entry, reinforce professional training, as well as attracting women to the logistics sector.

Marianne Vind (S&D, Denmark), MEP and Member of the EP Employment and Social Affairs Committee welcomed the speakers and participants to the webinar. She highlighted that the shortage of staff in the logistics sector was already visible, with an ageing population and major difficulties to recruit younger, skilled labour force. While the shortage of drivers will increase even more over the next years, she reminded the audience that solutions exist: as an example, lowering the minimum age from 21 to 18 years for professional truck drivers and allow training from the age of 17 can help attract more young people in the sector. Ms Vind noted that the logistics sector should ensure more favourable working conditions, with increased flexibility, better wages and more security, referring to secure truck parking areas which are still scarce across the EU. Finally, she mentioned that tackling gender stereotypes would be crucial to attract more female drivers and logistics workers.

Pablo Fabregas-Martinez, Member of the cabinet of EU Commissioner for Transport Adina Valean, presented the upcoming Commission initiatives aimed to alleviate the shortage of drivers and generally how to upskill the workforce to meet the demands of the logistics sector. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen already announced that 2023 will be the EU Year of Skills, where the Commission will introduce several initiatives to tackle the shortage of skills, promote investments in education and better cooperation with companies. One objective of the upcoming revision of the Driving license Directive would be to address the shortage of professional drivers, notably by improving the interoperability of certificates between Member states or by reducing the burden on drivers to get a professional license, without compromising road safety. Mr Fabregas-Martinez also reminded participants that the Commission had issued several communication materials and toolkits to tackle gender stereotypes in the transport sector. Finally, the Commission is encouraging social dialogues at national, sectoral and company level to improve working conditions of the logistics workforce.

Raluca Marian, Director EU Advocacy and General Delegate, IRU, opened her intervention by presenting the latest [IRU report](#) on the shortage of drivers in the EU: it estimates that 425 000 driver positions currently remain unfilled. The total shortage of drivers in Europe could rise over 2 million in 2026, due to the increased demand for transport and an ageing workforce, currently at an average age of 47. To tackle these worrying trend, Ms Marian noted that it was important to eliminate the gap between the school and the wheel by lowering the minimum age to become a professional driver to 18, in order to attract young people to the profession. Young drivers (below 25) have consistently represented only between 3 to 5% of the total EU workforce over the last years. The EU should also

harmonise the recognition of third country licenses among Member States to attract more non-EU drivers and reduce the shortage. She emphasised that the treatment of drivers should also be improved at loading/unloading places and with better safe and secure truck parking areas on the road, noting that so far, it is apparent that there is a lack of commitment from Member States to build secure parking areas, in the framework of the revision of TEN-T guidelines.

Morten Utengen, Chairman of the Board, Utengen Transport AS gave the perspective of a typical medium-sized road transport operator operating in Norway and across the EU. While he acknowledged recruiting drivers was easier in Norway due to overall better wages, much more can be improved to reduce the increasing shortage of drivers. He noted that day planning is difficult, as long working days are common due to several factors (delays, congestion etc), rest areas are scarce and/or poorly maintained, and drivers feel that they are treated like ‘criminals’, with reinforced controls and enforcement measures. Mr Utengen called on transport operators and shippers to come together and discuss in order to find good solutions to ensure drivers get a decent salary and improved working conditions. In conclusion he suggested that companies compete for the best assignment conditions, rather than compete on driving and working conditions.

Yves Baden, HR Director at CFL (Luxembourg) and Chair of the CER HR Directors Platform presented the challenges of tackling staff shortage in the rail freight sector. The sector faces similar concerns as the road freight sector, with an ageing workforce, and the difficulty to recruit younger, high-skilled workers: while the number of candidates is high every year, a few have the right skills to enter the company. Mr Baden noted some sectoral initiatives at EU level to attract new workers in the rail sector, such as the STAFFER Blueprint – Skills alliance, or the women in Rail agreement, to increase the attractiveness of railway jobs for women. CFL has also been implementing several initiatives to improve employer branding, and to ensure working schedules are more flexible, especially for train drivers/operators. He called on policymakers to support the companies’ efforts to keep people ‘fit’ along their professional career, also by an appropriate review of the Train Drivers Directive and ensure they acquire new needed skills needed, especially in the context of digitalization.

The European Logistics Platform consists of more than twenty industry stakeholders representing a wide variety of actors involved in logistics and supply chains across Europe. Current members are ACEA, Amazon, BDL, CER, CLECAT, Deutsche Bahn, Deutsche Post DHL Group, duisport, ECG, ERFA, ESC, ESPO, FEPORT, FERRMED, Hutchison Whampoa, IRU, Logistics UK, Michelin, NLA, Port of Rotterdam, TLN, UIRR, Volvo Group.

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